

# BETRAYAL AND REVICTIMIZATION

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## What is Betrayal Trauma?

- Any kind of trauma perpetrated by someone whom the victim trusts or depends on for fulfillment of basic needs (Freyd, 1996).
- Includes child maltreatment (e.g., sexual abuse perpetrated by a parent)



## Revictimization

- Survivors of childhood sexual abuse are 2.5 to 5.12 times more likely to experience a sexual assault in adulthood than women without an abuse history (Cloitre et al., 1996; Merrill & colleagues, 1999)



## Theoretical Explanations

- Imply a mediational model (Arata, 2002)
  - Emotional and behavioral consequences of abuse
- Increased vulnerability through...
  - Behavior (e.g., substance use)
  - Lifestyle choices (e.g., multiple partners, early consensual sex)
  - Environment (e.g., lack of social support)
  - Emotional response to abuse (e.g., dissociation, PTSD symptoms, alexithymia) (Cloitre, 1998)



## Betrayal Trauma Theory



- The child views the perpetrator as the key to his/her physical and psychological survival, and thus finds it advantageous to ignore the betrayal.
  - Allows for exploration of impact of betrayal on revictimization risk
- Predicts awareness of traumatic events will be impaired depending on level of betrayal
- Predicts cognitive mechanisms are damaged as a result of abuse
  - Cheater detector mechanism (Zurbriggen & Freyd, 2004)
    - Ability to detect trustworthiness in others
    - Abuse-related dissociation results in inability to label others as untrustworthy

### Present Study: Goals

- Examine revictimization within a betrayal trauma framework
- Exploratory examination of betrayal trauma theoretical claims
  - ▣ Betrayal detection
  - ▣ Response following a betrayal

### Research Questions

- Will high betrayal trauma survivors have *higher* rates of adolescent and adult victimization?
- Will high betrayal trauma survivors be *less accurate* in detecting betrayal in interpersonal contexts?
- Will survivors of high betrayal trauma be *more* likely to report continuing a relationship following an interpersonal betrayal?

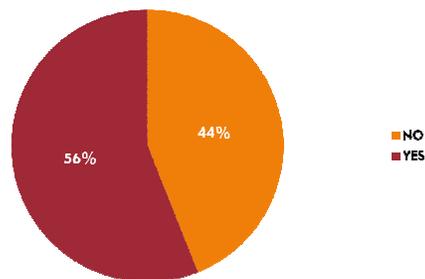
### Measures

- Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (Goldberg & Freyd, 2006)
  - ▣ Severe trauma history and level of betrayal associated with each trauma (low, medium, high)
  - ▣ 3 age categories: <12, 12-17, 18+
- Betrayal Detection Measure (Gobin & Freyd, 2006)
  - ▣ Frequency of everyday betrayals (e.g., infidelity, unfulfilled promises, lack of social support)
    - ▣ Perpetrated by those close to victim
  - ▣ Awareness
  - ▣ Reaction to betrayal

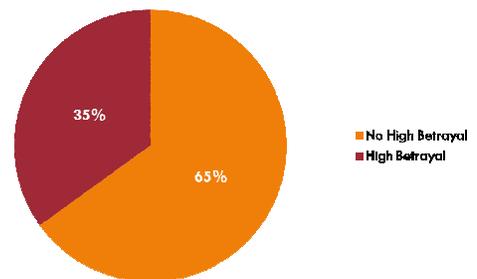
### Participants

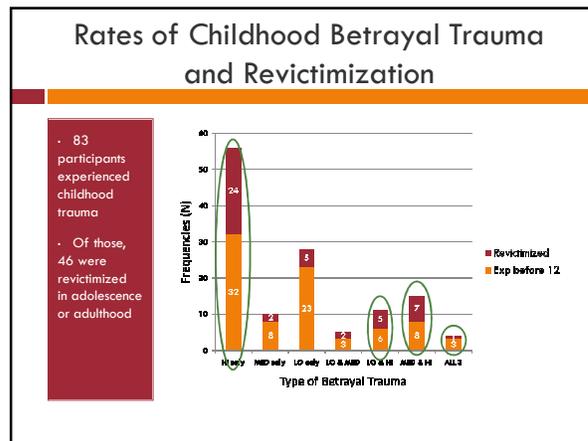
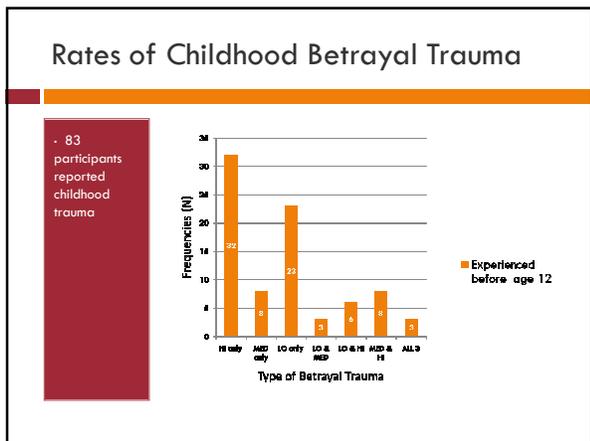
- 271 (177 female, 92 male, 2 unidentified) undergraduates at UO
  - ▣ Online
    - ▣ No self-selection
  - ▣ Age
    - ▣ 16-57 (M=19.79, SD=3.66)
  - ▣ Ethnicity
    - ▣ 79% Caucasian
    - ▣ Other ethnicities represented include: Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Multi-Ethnic, African American, Asian American

### Rates of Trauma



### Rates of High Betrayal





### Adolescent Relative Risk Ratios

		High Betrayal 12-17		
		NO	YES	TOTAL
High Betrayal <12	NO	185	37	222
	YES	15	34	49
		200	71	271

- 16% of those without a high betrayal trauma history were victimized in adolescence.
- 69% of people who did experience high betrayal during childhood were revictimized.
- Revictimization risk = 4.31

### Adult Relative Risk Ratios

		High Betrayal >18		
		NO	YES	TOTAL
High Betrayal <12	NO	202	20	222
	YES	25	24	49
		227	44	271

- 9% of those without a high betrayal childhood trauma history were victimized in adulthood.
- 49% of people who did experience high betrayal during childhood were revictimized in adulthood.
- Revictimization risk = 5.44

### Adolescent → Adult Revictimization

		High Betrayal >18		
		NO	YES	TOTAL
High Betrayal 12-17	NO	185	15	200
	YES	42	29	71
		227	44	271

- The presence of high betrayal trauma during adolescence was associated with experiencing high betrayal trauma in adulthood,  $\chi^2(1) = 42.84, p < .001, \Phi = .40$
- 41% of adolescent high betrayal survivors were revictimized while 7.5% of those without an adolescent trauma history were victimized during adulthood
- Revictimization risk = 5.45

### What about adolescent onset risk?

		High Betrayal >18		
		NO	YES	TOTAL
High Betrayal 12-17	NO	175	10	185
	YES	27	10	37
		202	20	222

- The presence of adolescent onset high betrayal was associated with experiencing high betrayal trauma in adulthood,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.58, p < .001, \Phi = 0.28$
- 27% of adolescent high betrayal survivors were revictimized while 5.4% of those without an adolescent trauma history were victimized during adulthood
- Revictimization risk = 5.00

Exploring Revictimization in a Betrayal Trauma Framework

Betrayal Detection

### Betrayal Detection Measure

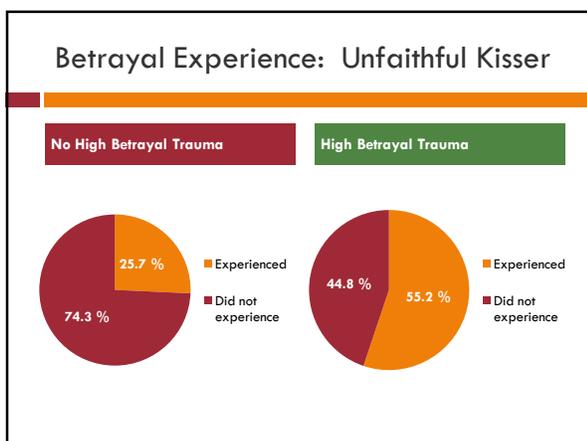
- Seven interpersonal betrayals
- Three aspects of interpersonal betrayal
  - ▣ How many times has this happened to you?
  - ▣ Were you aware that you had been betrayed?
  - ▣ How did you respond?

### Frequency of Experience

- High betrayal trauma survivors experience more everyday betrayals,  $t(269) = 7.21, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = .92$
- When they endorse a betrayal, high betrayal trauma survivors tend to experience it more frequently,  $t(244.02) = 4.39, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = .54$

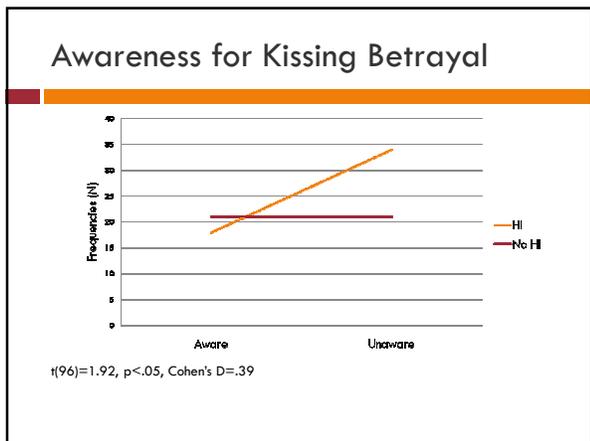
### How many times has this happened?

- You discover your partner has cheated on you by kissing another person.
  - ▣ Never
  - ▣ One time
  - ▣ Two to five times
  - ▣ Six to twenty times
  - ▣ Twenty-one to one hundred times
  - ▣ More than one hundred times

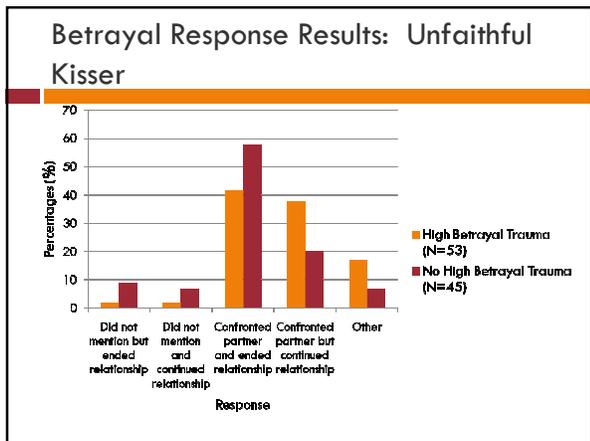


### How aware were you that you had been betrayed?

- Completely unaware
- Somewhat unaware
- I could have been aware if I wanted to be
- Somewhat aware
- I was completely aware



- ### What did you do after your partner kissed another person?
- Did not mention it to partner but ended relationship
  - Did not mention it to partner and continued relationship
  - Confronted partner and ended relationship
  - Confronted partner and continued relationship
  - Other



- ### Discussion – Part 1 of 2
- Key Findings:**
    - Childhood victimization was associated with the experience of high betrayal traumas in adolescence and adulthood.
    - Adolescent onset high betrayal trauma increases risk for adult high betrayal trauma.
    - High betrayal trauma appears to be associated with lower **awareness** for betrayal
    - High betrayal trauma appears to be associated with **response** to betrayal

- ### Discussion – Part 2 of 2
- Implications:**
    - Importance of betrayal
    - Perhaps, reducing revictimization risk is linked to accurate identification of betrayals and the ability to initiate proper self-protective actions.
  - Future Directions**
    - Explore trust dynamics using an experimental paradigm
    - Examine revictimization longitudinally
      - Diverse samples

- ### Acknowledgements
- Jennifer Freyd, Ph.D.
  - Dynamics Lab
  - Family
  
  - Visit <http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/> for more information on Dynamics Lab research

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